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STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

THE STRUGGLE FOR BREATH

1710—1753 A.D.

BY

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with a devotional reverence.

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. PREFACE .

IN this small book I have endeavoured to give a bird's eye view of the important events of Sikh history during the period under review for general readers. I claim little originality for writing it. I have freely used the published material at my disposal. My primary aim has been throughout, to give a connected narrative of the history of the Sikh people in a readable form. I have purposely avoided unnecessary details and tiresome discussions.

I am aware of many imperfections in the book, hence I humbly crave the indulgence of my intelligent readers to point out these mistakes to me.

At the end I acknowledge with gratitude the help and assistance of the authors, past and living, from

whose books I have quoted. My special thanks are due to Sardar Amar Singh, the Managing Proprietor of the Model Electric Press, Lahore, for publishing it and making it available for the readers.

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The Struggle for Breath

(1710—1753)

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The Tat-Khalsa and Banda

THE appointment of Abdul Samad Khan Ali Jang or Daler Jang as the Subedar of Lahore Province on the 12th February 1713 was a signal of red danger to the very existence of the Sikhs. Among their own ranks there had appeared a schism already. Baba Banda had by this time transgressed some of the fundamental principles of the Sikh religion. He posed to be a spiritual guide of the Khalsa and asked his comrades and followers in arms to worship him as a Guru or religious head. Moreover he changed

some other practices of the Sikhs without consulting the congregation. The true followers detested these unwarranted innovations and the seed of discord was sown deep in the minds of the members of both parties. The Tat-Khalsa or the conformists believed Guru Granth Sahib as their spiritual and religious guide, the Bible of their faith and an immortal and eternal living Pope, and according to the words of Guru Gobind Singh, the "Khalsa" or chosen ones the true manifestation of the living Guru and the whole Sikh Panth as the supreme authority on earth in matters religious, social and secular. The Tat-Khalsas reminded Baba Banda of these religious tenets and told him blankly that they would not worship or bow their head to any other authority in any form. Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh, was in those times resid-

ing at Delhi. She wrote several letters to different congregations to dissociate themselves from the new practices, which Banda had innovated. In fact, from that time onward she guided the activities of the conformists or Tat-Khalsa by her advice and influence. She wrote a letter to Banda pointing out to him several incongruent practices by starting which he had subverted some established traditions and customs of the Sikh faith. Banda gave an evasive reply, which annoyed many orthodox conformists. An open rift appeared and the Sikhs were divided into two camps on the question of faith and conviction. As regards the question of national defence and self-preservation they opposed the Imperial Army as separate entities with the same vehemence and stubbornness as before and many times

joined their forces and fought concerted actions.

Emperor Bahadur Shah and Banda

The news of the open rebellion, recent conquests, and territorial acquisitions of the Sikhs reached the Emperor Bahadur Shah in the Deccan. He marched towards the Punjab with his huge army to exterminate the Sikhs once for all. On 24th November 1710 A. D., the Emperor bivouacked at Sadhaura and sent a detachment under Rustam Dil Khan to fight with the Sikhs. The Imperial troops led by the Emperor himself appeared before the fort Lohgarh on Thursday the 30th December 1710, where Banda had fortified himself. A bloody battle was fought. The Sikhs were forced to vacate the fort by noon. The battle continued the whole night on the adjoining hillocks. On the next morning the Sikhs retreated into

the hills. Banda had escaped unnoticed under the cover of darkness. The fort of Lohgarh was captured and on the 3rd December 1710 the Royal *firmans* were issued to the Hindu Rajas of Siri Nagar and Nahan for the arrest of Baba Banda. The Emperor discovered a large treasure of the Sikhs buried in the fort of Lohgarh. Suspicions were naturally aroused that the Raja of Nahan was knowingly evading the arrest of Banda. Consequently, Sardar Hamid Khan arrested Bhup Parkash, son of Raja Hari Parkash of Nahan, on the basis of this alleged offence. Mohammad Amin Khan, who had been hotly pursuing and chasing the Sikhs in fastnesses and hills brought six cartloads full of heads of the Sikhs and presented them before the Emperor on 11th January 1711. Though the Sikhs in this region were defeated and dispersed, they were still making depredations and encroach-

ments around Lahore. Saf-Shikan Khan was sent against them. But the indomitable Sikhs did not yield. The confusion and lawlessness did not abate. Another force of 5,000 strong was sent against them under the command of valiant Sardar Hamid Khan to help Sardar Saf-Shikan Khan in February.

After his escape from Lohgarh, Banda did not sit quiet. Hardly three months had passed, when in May 1711 the Sikhs mustered between forty and fifty thousand strong on the plains of Bahrampur and Rupar. Being well equipped with matchlocks, spears, horses and necessary munitions the Sikhs again blew the conch of war. Men of undaunted courage and boundless energy that they were, they had gained fresh impetus and new momentum from their last defeat at Lohgarh. In the second week of May

the Sikhs and Banda fell upon the combined forces of Shamas Khan and Bazid Khan. A pitched battle was fought in which the Imperial troops were totally routed. Both the leaders were killed. The Sikhs were much pleased with this victory, for they had killed Bazid Khan by whose orders the innocent children of Guru Gobind Singh were put to death in December 1705 at Sirhind. Buoyed up by their recent success the Sikhs crossed the river Ravi and occupied the districts of Kalanaur, Batala, Aurangabad, Pasrur and other neighbouring Parganahs. When the sad news of the defeat of the Imperial troops reached the Emperor he sent strict orders to Rustam Dil Khan and Mohammad Amin Khan for the total annihilation of the Sikhs. By the joint efforts of these two generals the Sikhs were defeated in May 1711 near Pasrur.

Banda was forced to seek shelter in the hills of Jammu. The Sikhs felt greatly constrained by their defeats and it is probable that they would have suffered great losses, had not circumstances helped them. After some days the leaders of the expedition quarrelled among themselves over the matter of dividing the spoils of victory. Rustam Dil Khan was arrested and Mohammad Amin Khan was put in sole charge of the expedition against the Sikhs. Mohammad Amin Khan zealously carried out his duties and on the 12th January 1712 he sent 500 skulls of Sikhs to be presented before the Emperor. By this time the Emperor had reached Lahore and soon died there on the 18th February 1712. Nearly for one year and a half the Emperor had been with all his forces trying to suppress the Sikhs, but their number daily in-

creased and they became a terror to Mughal authority in the Punjab.

The War of Succession

The traditional war of succession between the Emperor's four sons broke out. As usual the would-be occupant of the throne of Delhi was to wade through the blood of his kinsmen, relatives and brothers. In the efforts to put the lustrous diamond upon their heads, many had to lose their lives. The nobles of the Court, who anxiously watched for such disturbed moments, busied themselves in making and reshaping things according to their own designs. This time Zulfikar Ali Khan, Amir-ul-Umra, the Viceroy of the Decan was a central figure in whose hands lay the destiny of the Empire. He supported the claims of Jahandar Shah, the eldest son of the deceased Emperor. Jahandar Shah was a dissipated wretch, who thought of nothing but

pleasure and ease. The second son, Azim-us-Shan, was courageous, popular, strong enough to rule and was wholeheartedly supported by the nobility of the Court. Zulfikar Ali Khan, knowing the weakness of his claimant, threw out a bait of false hopes to the other two claimant princes, Rafi-us-Shan and Jahan Shah, in case they supported Jahandar Shah in his rightful claim to the throne. By the united efforts of the three brothers Azim-us-Shan was defeated and killed. Being possessed with power and an army, Jahandar Shah, with the help of Zulfikar Ali Khan, turned against his two surviving brothers and showed the proverbial ingratitude inherent in the nature of princes towards their supporters and friends in time of trouble and distress. Promises were ignored, vows forgotten and the two brothers mercilessly put to the sword.

With the material help, political sagacity and intriguing capacity of Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Jahandar Shah now became the undisputed master of Hindustan and was crowned on Thursday 10th April 1712 A. D. To make his position still safer from the dangers of new claimants he ordered the speedy disposal of all the princes of the royal blood. The orders were complied with and the blood of the young innocent children flowed through the gutters of the royal palace. But sins never go unavenged. A prince of the royal blood, Farrukh Siyyar, who was in Bengal at this time, escaped this cruel and savage fate. He was the son of the deceased prince Azim-us-Shan, the second son of Bahadur Shah. Sayid Hussain Ali Khan espoused his cause and supported his claims. The Sayid also persuaded his brother Sayid Abdulla Khan, the Governor of Allaha-

bad, to join him in his plans. The two brothers played a game of life and death in taking up the cause of Furrukh Siyyar, whose pretensions to the throne were not so strong and valid according to law. But where the fate of a kingdom is decided on the point of the sword, force, not law, is the rule. At the head of the joined armies of the two Sayid brothers the would-be Emperor marched towards Agra. A battle was fought. Jahandar Shah, an indolent, ease-loving and pleasure-seeking prince and his chief Wazir, Zulfikar Ali Khan, were taken prisoners through the streets of Delhi and were beheaded. Their heads were stuck on poles and their bodies, hanging feet upwards on an elephant, carried through Delhi as prizes of war and for public show. The grey-headed and old minister Asad Khan, the father of Zulfikar Ali Khan, was forced

to join the procession, accompanied by all the ladies of the family. The aged and infirm father shed tears of blood and bore, this shame and disgrace heroically. In this way with the dignity and pomp of a victorious prince, Farrukh Siyyar entered Delhi and was crowned as Emperor of Hindusthan on 9th January 1713. The victor now began to play the traditional epilogue. All the descendants, supporters and relatives of Jahandar Shah were mercilessly massacred. The tongue of Shubh Chand, the Dewan, or Finance Minister, was cut out. Three princes of the royal blood were blinded by the inhuman practice of thrusting red hot iron bars into the eyes of the wretched victims. The Sayid brothers were amply rewarded for their services. The elder was created the Wazir of the Kingdom and the younger was raised to the post of Commander-in-Chief of the forces.

Campaign against the Sikhs Restarted

After the death of Bahadur Shah I, Mohammad Amin Khan gave up the pursuit of the Sikhs for the time being and waited for fresh orders from the new Emperor. The Sikhs had time to gird up their loins. A short respite of two months was sufficient to fill their activities with fresh vigour. Banda now occupied the Parganah of Sadhaura. He repaired his old fort of Lohgarh and made it serviceable. When Jahandar Shah ascended the throne, he appointed Zabardast Khan as Subedar of Lahore. The new Emperor sent Mohammad Amin Khan with strict orders towards Sadhaura where the Sikhs and Banda had been making preparations for a new battle. The Chakladar of Sirhind and other Chaudhris were commanded to help him with their full resources. Moham-

mad Amin Khan besieged Sadhaura. Indecisive skirmishes were fought, when Jahandar Shah called Mohammad Amin Khan to join him against an attack from Farrukh Siyyar. The Sikhs thus were left alone only for two months, as long as the war of succession was fought.

Farrukh Siyyar ascended the throne of Delhi in January 1713.

Farrukh Siyyar determined to crush the Sikhs altogether. He was an avowed enemy of this new sect. He took very vigorous and effective steps against them. He appointed Abdul Samad Khan, a Turani noble, Subedar of Lahore. Abdul Samad had already won many laurels on various battle-fields. At this time, he received a strict Royal *Firman* to extirpate the Sikhs first and to proceed to Lahore afterwards. His son Zakaria Khan was made the *Faujdar* of Jammu

territory where the Sikhs used to take shelter, after their repulsion by the Imperial army. Abdul Samad Khan laid siege to Sadhaura and Lohgarh in September 1713. After two months' hard struggle the Sikhs were forced to evacuate this fort. Meanwhile some other Sikh leaders had been carrying out their predatory incursions around Lahore successfully. Abdul Samad Khan continued his struggle against the Sikhs, but was nonplussed to notice their rapidity of movement, their method of warfare and the courage with which they fought. Moreover, the general populace of the Punjab supported them secretly. On the 3rd December 1713 Zakaria Khan reached Delhi and presented 1000 skulls of Sikhs before the Emperor. Abdul Samad Khan had not yet succeeded in his expedition, when he was recalled to Delhi. On the 24th

February 1714 he was commanded to proceed towards Rajputana with an army to punish some Rajput insurgent chiefs there.

Taking advantage of the absence of Abdul Samad Khan from the Punjab, the Sikhs again prepared themselves for their inevitable doom. They occupied a large belt of territory in the vicinity of the hills and as before began to menace Mughal authority. When this news reached the Emperor, he again ordered Abdul Samad Khan and Zakaria Khan to march against the Sikhs on the 16th June 1714 and at the same time to rouse the general populace against them. Prices were set on their heads. During the month of August 700 Sikhs attacked Rupar, but *Khawaja Mukarram*, the Assistant *Faujdar*, repulsed them with heavy losses. Resuming the charge of the Province,

Abdul Samad Khan appointed Khidmat Talab Khan in place of Zin-ud-Din to check the progress of the Sikhs. The new deputy blockaded all the by-ways and paths leading to the hills, and made it difficult for the Sikhs to seek refuge in those tracts after their retreat. The Sikhs, hard-pressed on all sides, made a sudden attack on Kalanaur and annihilated the forces of Santokh Rai and *Faujdar* Sohrab Khan and occupied that place. Before long the Sikhs defeated Sheikh Mohammad Daem and Sheikh-ul-Hind and occupied the Parganah of Batala as well. Sheikh Mohammad Daem was so much distressed by his defeat that he resolved to renounce the world.

The Defeat, Capture and Execution of Banda

When this news reached the Emperor, he was greatly exasperated.

On the 10th March 1715 he sent peremptory orders to Abdul Samad Khan, the Governor of Lahore, for the total extermination of the Sikhs and strictly warned him to take every step to that effect. Qamar-ud-Din and many other nobles were sent to the Punjab with the Imperial troops. *Firman* were issued to the officials, *Kardars*, *Faujdars* and *Nazims* of the Province to help Abdul Samad Khan with all their respective quotas and resources. Non-compliance was to be punished with death, dismissal, and confiscation of property. Moreover it was proclaimed to be a *Jihad* or a religious war of *Islam* against the *Kafirs* (the Sikhs). The non-combatant Mohammadan classes who had suffered at the hands of Banda and the Sikhs also joined to seek revenge on their despised foes and in many cases to gain paradise as *Ghazis* by fighting against

infidels. A huge army assembled. Ahmad Khan, the *Faujdar* of Gujrat, Aradat Mand Khan, *Faujdar* of Aimanabad, Nur Mohammad Khan of Aurangabad and Pasrur, Sheikh Mohammad Daem, Sayyid Hafiz Ali Khan the Parganah-holder of Patti Haibat Pur, Sohrab Khan of Kalanaur, Raja Bhim Singh Katoch, Dharam Dev of Jasrota and many other minor chiefs with their fighting men rallied to the Imperial standard under the command of Arif Beg Khan, the *Nazim* of Lahore, near Shah Ganj. This huge army moved towards the south-east and encamped at Kot Mirza Khan. The Sikhs and Banda also were not unmindful of the impending danger and the Imperial *firman*s. They sank their petty differences and to save their faith, conviction and sect from total extinction, assembled in large numbers at Lohgarh, about a mile to the

north of the present city of Gurdaspur. This time they determined to fight a pitched battle. The Sikhs fortified and repaired the old fortress of Lohgarh; the exact site of this place is nowadays located by a mound in the village of Bathwala. Preparing themselves for a decisive battle this time, the Sikhs now waited for the approach of the Imperial army. The fortress was surrounded by a moat filled with water. Moreover, the Sikhs had cut the courses of neighbouring canals and small streams, so that the whole adjoining ground became marshy and was turned into a small lake. It became impassable for men or beasts.

Abdul Samad Khan now moved towards Lohgarh with his army and laid siege to it about the 15th April 1715. Fierce and desperate actions were fought in which the Sikhs showed unfathomed courage and reckless spirit.

All the contemporary Mohammadan writers are obliged to praise the valour and fearlessness of the Sikhs in this battle. Anecdotes are still current that the Sikhs would come out from their fortress to get fodder for their animals, have a desperate struggle with the Imperial troopers and go back with the necessary rations. Fear of death they never knew. Meantime Qamar-ud-Din, the son of Mohammad Amin Khan, had also arrived from Delhi to help Abdul Samad Khan with his army. The siege was prolonged till the 7th December 1715. Superior numbers prevailed. In the Sikh camp there was a great scarcity of food and rations for men and beasts. The Sikhs fought with their full might but were severely defeated. Thousands were taken prisoners. Banda and other chief leaders of the Sikhs were also among the prisoners of war. This

severe defeat of the Sikhs was due to the haughtiness, pride and lack of military strategy on the part of Baba Banda. He was not even tolerant enough to hear the suggestions and plans of Baba Kahn Singh Bhalla and Miri Singh Bhujangi. According to these old and experienced war-comrades of Guru Gobind Singh, to fight a pitched battle with the Imperial army was to invite disaster upon their heads. Moreover, they had no heavy guns and there were little stores of food and ammunition in the fort. Several thousands of them were beheaded at the very spot. In the month of December 1715 Abdul Samad Khan entered Lahore triumphantly. About 800 leading and influential men among them were kept to be presented before the Emperor at Delhi. Many thousands were handed over to the officials and men of the Imperial Army who cut off

their heads and threw their bodies in the Ravi. At Lahore the infuriated mobs showed great anger and eagerness for killing the Sikhs in the very streets. Baz Singh, the chief of the Sikh leaders, was killed by a large stone thrown by the mother of Bazid Khan from a roof.

In the month of December Zakaria Khan started for Delhi with the Sikh prisoners. He reached there in nearly two and a half months—a very long time indeed. On the 29th February 1716 the procession of the prisoners was taken through the streets of Delhi. They were offered pardon by the Emperor in case they embraced Islam. A period of five days was given to make the choice between death or conversion. The imprisoned Sikhs, one and all, refused to save their lives at the cost of their religion. They

unanimously preferred to suffer death and persecution gladly for their faith. On the 5th March 1716 orders were issued for the general massacre of the Sikhs. Daily one hundred of them were selected for execution. They bore their doom with great firmness. Each one of them would even go to the point of requesting the executioners to cut off his head before his other companions. When the selection was made for the next day each of them would earnestly implore his other comrades and fellow religionists to let him have the first chance. The work of execution went on intermittently till 9th June 1716. On this fateful day Baba Banda with other Sikh leaders of note was brought out of prison. All of them bore the executioner's blow with the utmost indifference and intrepidity. Their bravery, courage and firmness for the faith was a subject of praise and won.

der for all witnesses and contemporary historians and so it shall always remain for the future generations.

The crushing defeat and the executioner's sabre could not put an end to the activities of the Sikhs. With the blood of the martyrs the Promethean fire lit by Guru Gobind Singh became a conflagration, unextinguishable and inexhaustible. The executioners had not finished their work when fresh news of the depredations of the Sikhs was heard. For the Sikhs it was a question of self-existence and self-preservation, while the Government of the day took them as insurgents, rebels, and brigands. Consequently very hard steps were taken against the whole nation.

“ After the defeat and death of Banda every measure was taken that an active resentment could suggest,

not only to destroy the power, but to extirpate the race of the Sikhs. An astonishing number of that sect must have fallen in the last two or three years of the contest with the Imperial Army, as the irritated Mohammadans gave them no quarter " (Malcolm, p. 85). " A royal edict was issued to put all who professed the religion of Nanak to the sword and a reward was offered for the head of every Sikh. Wherever a Sikh was found, he was butchered mercilessly. In order to give full effect to the royal mandate Mohammadans and Hindus were strictly enjoined to clip their hair short. The Hindus were ordered to shave their heads, and any Hindu found with long beard and hair was immediately slain. These extreme measures of resentment and persecution spread terror and consternation throughout the whole Sikh nation. Those who remained of them

fled to the mountains to the north-east of the Punjab or concealed themselves in remote jungles " (Litt's *History of the Punjab*, p. 188). Large numbers bent before the tempest, which they could not resist, and abandoning the outward usage of their religion satisfied their conscience with the secret practice of its rites.

" The defeat and death of Banda effected a total destruction of the power of the Sikhs and ostensibly the extirpation of their sect. An edict was issued by Farruck Siyyar directing that every Sikh falling into the hands of his officers, should on a refusal of embracing the Mohammadan faith be put to the sword. A valuable reward was also given by the Emperor, for the head of every Sikh and such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such the exertions that the name of a Sikh no longer existed in the Mug-

hal Dominion. Those who still adhered to the tenets of Nanak either fled to the mountains at the head of the Punjab or cut off their hair and extensively renounced the profession of their religion". (Forster, *Travels*, page 271 ; Browne, *Indian Tract* II, 13 ; Cunningham first edition, 1849.)

As a result of this Royal *Firman* great atrocities were perpetrated upon the Sikhs by the officials of the day.

" The official hierarchy eagerly gave effect to the orders and the unofficial notables vied with one another in this vicious campaign. Every village, every hamlet, every town served as a slaughter-house where God's innocent creatures, the Sikhs, were butchered. Every tree served as a gibbet and every dark neglected well became a *Drug* into which those professing the Khalsa faith or men suspected of being in sympathy with them were

thrown indiscriminately and were then left to die of hunger or to be stifled by their foul and poisonous stench. In a surprisingly brief period, the whole land was cleared of the Khalsa. Their houses were pillaged, plundered or set on fire, and men, women and children were mercilessly bayoneted. Some of them fled to the far off jungles and there sought the protection which their own fellow-beings denied them. Not a few hid themselves in caverns, away from the haunts of men, to be captured and put to a horrible end. Not often these haunts were discovered by search parties who never failed to pile up logs of wood at their entrances and set fire to them. The inmates were smoked out like veritable nests of hornets and no one ever heard the tale of their sufferings " (Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Sikh Martyrs*, page 126).

The repressive measures and active steps against them forced the Sikhs to leave their homes and seek shelter in the Kahquan forest near Gurdaspur, in the thick forest extending from Ludhiana to Karnal, in the forest of Jullundur Doab, in Lakhi jungle adjoining the Bikaner and Bahawalpur territories and in the jungle beyond the river Jhelum. They formed themselves into small bands and lived a life of persecuted people chased by an itinerant army specially appointed for this purpose.

Weakening of Authority

At Delhi a new scene was enacted. Farrukh Siyyar felt sick of the dominance of the Sayid brothers. He hatched a conspiracy to oust them from power. The intrigue leaked out. The Sayid brothers deposed, blinded and imprisoned the Emperor in a solitary cell on 18th February 1719.

For 3 months the unhappy Farrukh Siyyar suffered from the painful agonies of death and was finally done to death by the dagger on 16th May. The destiny of the vast Empire was now controlled by the Sayid brothers. In six months following the death of Emperor Farrukh Siyyar, they set up two puppet kings on the throne of Delhi, Rafi-ul-Darjat and Rafi-ul-Doula. The former died of consumption, while the latter died of dysentery and mental derangement. The king-makers put the crown on the head of Muhammad Shah, better known as "Rangila". Meantime the two Sayid brothers had quarrelled over the distribution of the booty and were now rival politicians. Mohammad Shah formed a plot to get rid of these all-powerful brothers. Hussain Ali the elder brother was murdered by a hired assassin in October

1720. The power of the Sayid Ministers was broken and Mohammad Shah now became an independent Sovereign. Rapid changes at Delhi did not bring any change in the Government of the Punjab. A movable column was despatched to crush the Sikhs completely. Age and sex were not to be spared. Although the Sikhs were temporarily subdued, the "Khalsa" was not dead. It waited only for a favourable hour to rise with renewed vitality, animated by bitter hatred for the sufferings it had endured and encouraged by the memory of triumphs in the past (Jullundur District Gazetteer 1904, page 28).

The feeble position of the Government encouraged many other turbulent and law-defying classes like *Ranghars*, *Gujars*, *Bhattis* and *Jats* to plunder and ravage. In broad daylight cities were sacked, caravans' looted and

revenues of villages seized. Unfortunately, the petty officials always attributed these crimes to the Sikhs, who on the other hand are strictly forbidden to commit highway robbery by the precepts of their faith. Isa Khan Manjh was one of those powerful robber chiefs. Since 1713 he had been plundering and occupying the neighbouring parganahs between the Sutlej and the Beas. He defeated the local *Faujdars* and robbed the trade caravans between Delhi and Lahore. He forcibly collected revenue from the villagers. He was a tactful man and sought the protection and patronage of an influential grandee at Court, Shams-ud-Daula, by sending him a part of the booty. For all his offences of this sort the Sikhs were blamed. According to the author of *Masar-ul-Umra* he had grown so powerful that "through fear of him

the tiger used to draw its claws back.³

In 1718 Abdul Samad Khan sent Shahdad Khan Khesgi against Isa Khan Manjh. Isa Khan met the Imperial army bravely at the head of 3,000 horse. In this battle the three sons of Kapur Singh, the *Brar* Chief of Faridkot and Kot Kapura with their followers fought against Isa Khan Manjh. A hot action was fought near Thara. The Imperialists suffered heavy loss. The tables would have been turned against Shahdad Khan had not the father of Isa Khan been shot dead. Hearing of the demise of his father, Isa Khan charged violently and ordered the *mahaut* to drive the elephant to the place where Shahdad Khan had taken his post. Maddened with rage and fury, he was recklessly advancing, when Seman Singh, son of Kapur Singh in-

tercepted his way and challenged him to a single-handed fight. After some exchange of blows, Séman Singh plunged himself into the *howdah* of Isa Khan's elephant, cut off his head and drank the blood of his foe in consequence of a solemn pledge which he had taken upon himself; for Isa Khan Manjhi had treacherously got his aged father Kapur Singh invited to his place through the intervention of a saint, and hanged (Sir Attar Singh, C.I.E., *History of the Sidhu Brars and Phul Bans*, Manuscript).

In 1720 Nawab Abdul Samad Khan had to suppress the revolt of Hussain Khan, the Afghan Chief of Kasur. Hussain Khan had declared himself an independent Chief since 1713 and had many times defeated the armies of Lahore and of the Shahzada (*Khafi Khan*, 861). He had collected

about eight or nine thousand horsemen under him. Abdul Samad Khan sent an army against him under the command of Kutub Din. In 1719 the Afghan Chief crushed and annihilated the Imperial army and slew the Commander.

At that time the whole Province was in a state of lawlessness and confusion. In every part robbery, rapine and devastation stalked. Circumscribed on all sides by dangers, by predatory encroachments of the *Bhatties*, *Gujars*, *Jats* and other tribes, the diplomat Governor extended a cordial hand towards the Sikhs, and thought of taking the benefit of their valour and courage in battle. He appeased the persecuted Sikhs by offering them *jagirs*, services, and by declaring a general peace with them. He kept 500 of them in his service at one rupee a day per man, promised them Rs. 5,000 monthly

as their expenses and restored them the old *jagir* of *Parganah* Jhabal, which was granted by King Akbar to Guru Ramdas. Terms were settled. The Sikhs on their part assured the Governor help in case of a foreign invasion and internal disturbances. They came back from their hiding places and settled down as peaceful cultivators in their respective homes. Abdul Samad Khan now organized a campaign on a large scale against Hussain Ali Khan in 1122 Hijri, or 1720 A. D. A battle was fought at Chunian, in which the Afghan Chief was slain and his country seized (*Khafi Khan* p. 862).

A temporary peace was restored in the Province. Confident of his power and order Abdul Samad Khan again turned his attention toward the Sikhs. First of all he stopped the promised sum of their monthly expenditure. Then he reduced the pay of

the Sikhs in his service from one rupee a day to eight annas. After some time he ordered that all those who had lately suffered at the hands of the Sikhs could apply for justice. By these political tricks Abdul Samad Khan began to torment the Sikhs. The Mohammadans and others presented baseless petitions for redress against the Sikhs. In pursuance of this so-called justice the property of the Sikhs was sold, their lands seized and their houses auctioned. The Sikhs left the service of Abdul Samad Khan. They were again declared outlaws and rebels. The sword of the executioner was sharpened again for them. Leaving their homes the Sikhs again fled to their favourite resorts, the hills and the forests. For full three years up to 1722 the old royal edict was put into effect and the followers of the Sikh faith were racked, pilloried and gibbet-

ed. Their houses of worship were demolished and desecrated. Various devices were used for putting them to death—cracking their bones on the wheel, throwing them into hot oil, burning them alive, cutting their flesh with red hot pincers and beating them to death with wooden hammers. They were offered pardon in case they embraced Islam. But brave was the choice of the Sikh. There is not a single instance when a Sikh prisoner renounced his faith to save his life. They cared more for their soul and conscience than for worldly comforts and material prosperity.

Not a long time passed, when again there reigned anarchy and confusion throughout the Province. In Kashmir there broke out open rebellion headed by a fanatic *Mullah* against Hindus and Mohammadan Shiyyas. The Pathans of Kasur raised their standard of

revolt. The Sikhs, who had been always on the watch for such auspicious chances, came out from their hiding places and secret caves. In 1723 they assembled and inflicted severe punishment on all those who were taking a leading part in the extirpation of the Sikhs. About the year 1723 Bhai Mani Singh, a sage and scholar among the Sikhs, was appointed head-priest at Amritsar. The authorities at Lahore were so weak that they had not enough courage left to expel the Sikhs even from Amritsar. Sikh *Jathas* occupied it for two years without molestation and interference.

When the news of civil commotion, disorder and rebellious risings in the Province reached Mohammad Shah Rangila, he transferred Abdul Samad Khan to the Governorship of Multan as an incompetent official and his son Zakaria Khan was put in charge of the

Lahore Province in 1726. The attention of the new Governor was strictly drawn to the old royal edicts concerning the Sikhs.

Taking charge of the Province, Zakaria Khan appointed Lakhpat Rai, a *Khatri* of Aminabad, his Prime Minister, and his younger brother Jaspat Rai acted as Secretary and Counsellor. Zakaria Khan determined to exterminate the Sikhs, root and branch. His Prime Minister and Secretary showed more zeal and enthusiasm than their master; an army was recruited and the Sikhs were hunted from place to place. Peaceful agriculturists were brought from their villages and put to death in the streets of Lahore. Rewards were offered for the arrests of the Sikhs.

"They were daily brought in chains and executed in the streets of Lahore" (Mohammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 193). The Sikhs left

their homes and went to pass their days in the hills, forests and jungles. The rigorous and harsh measures adopted by Zakaria Khan proved ineffective. In 1728, Sikh bands under *Dewan* Darbara Singh and others looted a caravan which was carrying the Imperial treasury from Lahore to Delhi. At the approach of the army they again disappeared in the *Sandal Bar* beyond the Ravi.

Getting tired of the Sikhs, Zakaria Khan, with the advice of his ministers, proclaimed a *Jihad* or religious war against them in 1731. Every effort was made to collect as large a force as possible. The Sikhs also made preparations for resistance. They mustered about 20,000 strong near the Kanhuwan marshes in the Gurdaspur district. The army of *Jihad* consisted about 50,000 strong under the command of Mir Inayat

Ali. For several months the battle continued. The Sikhs resorted to their old guerilla warfare. They attacked during the night and retired to their hiding places, 30 or 40 miles away, before day-break. They formed themselves into several divisions and fell upon the stragglers or supplies of their enemies. The "*Haideri* Flag" could not inflict much loss upon the Sikhs, for the Sikhs never offered a pitched battle. The leaders turned towards Lahore in disappointment and disgust and encamped at Bhilowal, 16 miles to the south of Lahore. During the night some Sikhs made a sudden charge, galloping their horses at full speed into the enemy's camp. A bloody battle was fought. *Mullah* Mir Mohammad, the principal organiser of this *Jihad*, and many other notable leaders of the "*Haideri* Flag", were slain. The Sikhs got immense booty and again retired to the hills.

The condition of the Province became worse than before. "The brigand chiefs, such as Panah Bhatti, the terror of the tract from Hasan Abdal to the bank of the Ravi, and Mir Mar, whose hunting ground was the *Doab* between the Ravi and the Sutlej" wrought havoc in the Province by their acts of robbery and depredation. (*Muasar-ul-Umra*, ii, 106.)

Repression and persecution made the Sikhs stronger. Their number increased and they became formidable foes to be reckoned with. Zakaria Khan now thought of conciliating and befriending them. It was a political measure of dire necessity at a time when the whole Province was thrown into a semi-anarchical condition. The Delhi Empire at the centre was at that time rotten to the core. The Emperor indulged in wine, women and music. The provincial Governors assumed

independence and founded their own dynasties. Before this time the *Subedars* were appointed for the tenure of four years and now the office became hereditary, owing to the weakness of the Central Government and the strength of the provincial Governors. Thus in 1730 Murshid Quli Khan's family in Bengal, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah in the Deccan, Saadat Khan in Oudh and Abdul Samad Khan's family in the Punjab wielded unrestricted powers. To pay allegiance to the Emperor at Delhi was only a matter of form. The administration and defence of the respective Provinces was now the immediate and personal concern of these hereditary Governors. They proved themselves to be strong, judicious and capable rulers and brought peace and prosperity in their Provinces.

Zakaria Khan was much distressed

at heart by the unpeaceful state of things in his Province. He was anxious to keep his Province in order. Through Shahbeg Singh of Jambhar he opened negotiations with the Sikhs. With the sanction of the Emperor he granted a *Jagir* of Rs. 1,00,000 per year to the Khalsa, sent a robe of honour and also the title of *Nawab* for their chief leader in 1732. The Governor's embassy reached Amritsar and presented the *Sanad* and robes of honour in an open *Dewan* or meeting held before the Akal Takhat (in Golden Temple) Amritsar. The Khalsa refused to accept any favour from the Viceroy. Shahbeg Singh, the embassy, earnestly implored the Khalsa to accept it. But the robe of honour and the title of *Nawab* no one would accept. With much difficulty and persuasion the title was conferred on Kapur Singh, the founder of the Singhpurian *Misl*.

In those times *Dewan* Darbara Singh, *Nawab* Kapur Singh, the flag-bearer, Hari Singh Hazuri, Baba Dip Singh Shahid, Dhiraj Singh Hazuri, Baba Kahn Singh Bhalla, Hari Singh Langri, Karam Singh Khatri, and Bhai Mani Singh of Kaibowal or Longowal in Patiala State were the leading personalities among the Sikhs. When peace was concluded with the Government about 3,000 Sikhs took up their abode at Amritsar. Others retired to their villages and took up agriculture. For the succeeding six years the Sikhs remained at peace with the Government. Zakaria Khan suppressed the lawless tribes with the help of the Sikhs. Peace and prosperity came back to the Punjab.

Division into two Dals

In 1734 *Dewan* Darbara Singh died. The number of the young Khalsa who were fond of territorial ac-

quisition was growing. For discipline the wise old leaders proposed to divide the Sikhs into two main divisions, the *Buddha Dal* and the *Tarna Dal*, or Old Khalsa and Young Khalsa. Nawab Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, joined the *Buddha Dal*. The *Tarna Dal* was further divided into five sections or *Mists*. The leaders of the first *Jatha* or group were Dip Singh, Natha Singh and Sudh Singh, *Shahids*. The leaders of the second group were Prem Singh and Dharam Singh, *Khatris* of Amritsar. The leaders of the third were Dasandha Singh Gill and Fateh Singh a descendant of Bhai Bhagtoo. The leaders of the fourth section were Baba Kahn Singh Tehan, Baba Binod Singh Bhalla and Dip Singh. The leaders of the fifth *Jatha* or group were Bir Singh and Amar Singh. Every section of the *Tarna Dal* included about 500

horsemen. The *Buddha Dal* included about 1000 old, experienced and tried Sikhs.

The Sikhs now began to lead peaceful lives and took up their old professions. They converted their swords into ploughshares and enjoyed the comforts of home life. Instead of wielding the sword and bringing fire and destruction they now contributed to the prosperity and plenty of the Province. The policy of conciliation had its desired effects. Friendship and goodwill triumphed where repression had failed. A few hundred armed Sikhs remained at Amritsar. When all was quiet and Khan Bahadur found himself firmly established he reversed his policy towards the Sikhs. With the connivance of his Prime Minister, Lakhpat Rai, he ordered the confiscation of their *Jagir*. The Sikhs remonstrated against these illegal injunctions. At

last the inevitable happened. Again there opened out a wide gulf between the Sikhs and Zakaria Khan.

Resumption of Struggle

Zakaria Khan promulgated the old royal edict of Farrukh Siyyar against them and recruited an army of 10,000 under Lakhpat Rai and Mukhlis Khan to crush them. For four months both the *Dals* were opposing and fighting the Imperial army. Mukhlis Khan and many other nobles were killed. A new army was sent. In the meantime the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej and took shelter in the jungles or the forts which nature had provided for them. The Imperial army had not yet reached Lahore, when the leaders of the young Khalsa or *Tarna Dal* again returned and pillaged and sacked the parganahs on the west of the Lahore Province adjoining the Lakhi Jungle. The *Buddha Dal*

or the old Khalsa had by this time returned from the Karnal jungles and reached village Thikriwala near Barnala, the capital city of Baba Ala Singh, in 1736. Baba Ala Singh received them cordially. His son, Lal Singh, and grandson, Amar Singh, took *Pahul* or were baptized. Marching northward, the *Buddha Dal* suddenly appeared at Amritsar at the time of Dewali. Hearing this the Governor at once sent a large army. A battle was fought in November 1736 near village Basarke in Amritsar district. The Sikhs were defeated and fled toward the forests of Chunian.

After three months the two *Dals* combined their forces and fought the Imperial army near Hujra Shah Mukim. The Sikhs at this time inflicted a crushing defeat upon their enemies, devastated and looted a long tract of country and again fled to the

jungles. Zakaria Khan ordered the laws against them to be enforced strictly. No Sikh was permitted to bathe in the sacred tank at Amritsar. He was at once seized and on refusing to accept Islam was instantly put to death. Sentinels were posted around the tank, for it was a common belief amongst the populace that their *Guru* had mixed *Amrit* or water of immortality in it, and, consequently, the Sikhs after taking a bath in it, become immortals.

The Martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh

Bhai Mani Singh, the Divine of the Khalsa, offered to pay Rs. 4,000 to the Government, in case the Sikhs were allowed to assemble and perform their worship at the time of *Dewali*. Gold dazzled the eyes of the local magistrate, Abdul Razak, and permission was finally approved by Zakaria

Khan. The permission and approval were given with a mischievous motive. It was planned that in this way the Government officials would be able to put all the Sikhs to the sword. At the time of their assemblage and worship they would be besieged and the ghastly carnage would be performed. Bhai Mani Singh sent this news of the permission of holding the *Dewali Mela* to the Khalsa. They flocked toward Amritsar. The Governor also secretly arranged for a wholesale massacre of the Sikhs. Before the appointed day the Sikhs became aware of the intentions of the Government. They at once dispersed. Zakaria Khan was disappointed, for the snare laid did not prove successful. Bhai Mani Singh was asked to pay the stipulated sum. The Bhai argued that the Government officials had broken the terms of contract. The

promise was made in case the assemblage was allowed to perform worship with freedom. Zakaria Khan did not hear the argument and ordered his death by tearing his limbs off in case the Bhai refused to embrace Islam. The limbs of Bhai Mani Singh were publicly torn off in 1738 A. D. His *Shahidganj* is situated on the eastern side of Lahore Fort. The death of Bhai Mani Singh was the spark which kindled the secret flame of animosity against Zakaria Khan in the minds of the Sikhs. They issued from their places of concealment and commenced their predatory incursions. Hard-pressed by the itinerant army they again hid themselves in the sandy tracts and the bushy jungles of the Cis-Sutlej territory. The sacred places of the Sikhs were demolished, defiled and desecrated. Possession of the Golden Temple was taken

by one Massa *Ranghar*. He held nautch parties and dancing performances inside the Hari Mandir. This piece of news reached the Khalsa in the desert of Bikaner.

Sardar Mehtab Singh of Miran Kot and Sukha Singh, carpenter, of Mari Kambo resolved to visit Amritsar and stop this defilement. In the disguise of revenue collectors they presented themselves before Massa and made their obeisance. At a favourable moment *Sardar* Mehtab Singh cut off the head of the accursed libertine and carried it away (1738).

Though the Sikhs were a persecuted people, they always showed the courage of their convictions. In the same year Kutab Din Khan, the *Nazim* of Jullundur Doaba, burnt the Sikh temple at Kartarpur and turned out Sodhi Bad Bhag Singh from that place. Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia with

his followers came out from his hiding place to avenge this wrong. One day when Kutab Din was hunting in a forest the Sikhs fell upon him and killed him.

The whole machinery of the Government was now set in motion against the Sikhs. They were not to be spared on any account. Every Sikh was to be butchered mercilessly at the very spot where he was found. The numbers of the movable column were increased and the men who offered shelter to Sikhs were cruelly dealt with. The Sikhs again disappeared in the jungles and forests.

“Even at the low ebb to which the Sikhs had been reduced by the destruction of their force, the death of their leader and the proscription of their sect, they had continued to resort secretly to Amritsar” (Forster’s *Travels*, p. 272). According to Malcolm,

p. 88, who gives it on the authority of a contemporary Mohammedan author, "Some performed this pilgrimage in secret and in disguise, but in general the Sikh horsemen were seen riding at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt and sometimes taken prisoners, but they used on such occasions to seek, instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom. An instance was never known of a Sikh, taken on his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith."

Nadir Shah's Invasion

In 1738-1739 Nadir Shah invaded India and gave a death-blow to the decaying Mughal Empire. The worm-eaten structure fell to pieces at the mere touch. The army of Mohammad Shah was defeated and annihilated near Karnal. The conqueror

entered Delhi and put the Imperial family and the proudest peers to the lowest depth of humiliation by marrying their daughters to the uncouth and half-civilized *Khurasanies*. On the 5th May 1739 he left for Persia carrying fifteen crores of rupees in cash, besides jewellery, rich clothing and furniture, worth fifty crores and many other famous and valuable ornaments of the royal family, including the Koh-i-Noor diamond of world fame and the renowned Peacock Throne (Ashub ii, 367 and 375). In Hindusthan 200,000 people were put to the sword (Beale's Dictionary p. 201). Nadir Shah annexed the *Subah* of Kabul and the whole territory lying west of the Indus, as well as the province of Thatta and lower Sindh, along with the ports situated in it. In addition he received in perpetual assignment the revenue of the four Cis-Indus

Mahals of Sialkot, Gujrat, Aurangabad and Pasrur, and according to a treaty the Governor of Lahore was made responsible for sending to Nadir Shah twenty lakhs a year on account of the revenue of these four *Mahals*. The Khalsa could not bear this ignominious treatment of their motherland by a foreign invader. It is strange that at the time when Nadir's very name struck terror and death-like awe in the whole of Asia, these persecuted but wonderful people commenced plundering the Persian army and did not stop till it passed the Attock. Nadir Shah's power and terror is appropriately described by a saying :

Hukum-i-Kadir gardad

Hukum-i-Nadir na gardad.

(The order of God can be changed, but Nadir's order must stand absolute.)

"The Sikh forces appeared in arms at the period of Nadir Shah's return

from Delhi when the Persian army, encumbered with spoil, regardless of order, was attacked in the rear by detached predatory parties of Sikh cavalry who occasionally fell upon the baggage guards, and acquired a large plunder " (Forster's *Travels*, p. 272 ; Browne, *Indian Tracts*, pp. 13, 14).

Nadir Shah, when he passed through the Punjab, on his return from Delhi, asked the Governor Zakaria Khan what sort of people these Sikhs were who had plundered the rear of his army, which was laden with spoils, and prove a contempt of their enemies. He said they were a crowd of disorderly *faqirs* who visited the tank of Amritsar every six months. Nadir asked where their abode was, to which the Governor replied, " Their houses are their saddles." The conqueror smiled and said " Surely they ought to be crushed and their country seized." (Mohammad

Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 212.) After the return of Nadir Shah the dismemberment of the weak Mughal Empire went on rapidly. Everywhere the bold adventurers busied themselves in chalking independent territories out of the falling edifice of the Empire. The Khalsa also did not lag behind. A year after Nadir's invasion a large number of Sikhs gathered together, marched towards Sirhind, created a great disturbance there and seized many villages. An expedition against them was sent from Delhi under Azim-ullah Khan and they were subdued with great difficulty (*Chuhar Gulzar Shujai* by Harcharan Das, p. 373). The leaders of the *Tarna Dal*, or the Young Khalsa, also conquered and possessed an oblong tract of land lying at the foot of the hills on the eastern skirts of the Jullundur and

Gurdaspur districts.

Annoyed deeply by the incursions and depredations of the Sikhs and in fulfilment of his promise with Nadir Shah, Khan Bahadur ordered strong measures to be taken against the Sikhs. Adina Beg, a tactful man and a successful administrator, was appointed Governor (*Faujdar*) of the Jullundur Doab and *Nazim* of the hill country to the north of Lahore and Amritsar. The Sikhs were at that time occupying territory around Aminabad. Adina Beg marched against them at the head of a large army. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and many other important Sikh leaders fought with him near Gujranwala in 1743. The Sikhs were defeated and they were forced to retire towards the hills. This bloody contest continued. About the end of the year 1744, Adina Beg had to fight against a large army

of the Sikhs headed by the Bhangi and Ahluwalia chiefs in the jungles of Khidrana or Muktsar, to the south of the Sutlej. The Sikhs retired with a heavy loss. In the month of May 1745 Zakaria Khan, the virtual Satrap of the Punjab, died. Adina Beg was obliged to stop his expedition and went back to Adina Nagar, his own capital, to watch the state of affairs at Lahore.

Zakaria Khan's Death

After the death of Zakaria Khan there was a quarrel among his four sons over the patrimony of their father. The Emperor Mohammad Shah Rangila foolishly refused the proposal of the *Grand Wazir* Qamar-ud-din-Khan for giving over the charge of Lahore and Multan to the sons of the deceased Zakaria Khan. After great hesitation the *Wazir* begged the *Subedari* of the Province for himself. It was conferred. The *Grand Wazir* sent his Deputy

Mir Khan to take over charge. This new arrangement brought confusion and anarchy in its train. " Disorder commenced. Everywhere lawless men, plunderers and adventurers began to desolate the realm. On one side the Raja of Jammu rebelled, on the other the Sikhs began to create tumult and trouble " (Elliot, viii, *Mukhlis Tazkria*, 289). Finding all means of bringing peace ineffective Yahya Khan was appointed as Deputy Governor and the *Wazir* continued to be a titular *Subedar* of the Province.

The Sikhs took advantage of these uncertain times. They began to collect revenue and levy contribution near Aminabad, their favourite place of concealment. Yahya Khan on his re-appointment, adopted severe measures against them. A small army was sent under the command of Jaspat Rai against them. The Sikhs put up

a hard fight and repulsed and defeated the Imperial army, killing *Dewan Jaspat Rai* who held charge of the districts of Sialkot and Gujranwala in the beginning of 1746. The Viceroy was exasperated to hear of the sad plight of the army and his official. *Jaspat Rai's* brother, *Dewan Lakhpat Rai*, was working as Prime Minister at Lahore. Hearing the news of his brother's death he swore vengeance on the Sikhs. He approached his master with his woeful tale and "the Governor, *Yahya Khan* issued a proclamation for a general massacre of all Sikhs, wherever they could be found. Death was to be the punishment of all persons who invoked the name of *Guru Gobind Singh* and a reward was offered for the heads of Sikhs. Thousands were put to death daily and their heads brought before the *Subedar* of Lahore for reward" (*Mohammad Latif, History of the Punjab*, p. 213).

Yahya Khan and Lakhpat Rai now made preparations on a large scale for the total destruction of the Sikhs. The Sikhs also assembled, passed the *Gurmata* and resolved to fight tooth and nail this time. The leaders of the *Buddha Dal* were in favour of the predatory methods, while the Young Khalsa or *Tarna Dal*, determined to give a pitched battle. The Old Khalsa had to yield. Letters were sent and nearly 25,000 Sikhs assembled near Aminabad. A desperate fight took place. The Imperialists had blockaded all the passes leading to the hills. The jungles in which the Sikhs had encamped were set on fire. The Sikhs repaired towards the hills. The hill chiefs offered them battle and slew many of them. The Imperial army continuously chased the vanquished Sikhs for about two months. This battle is one of the bloodiest in the

annals of the Sikh people. The loss of the Khalsa is computed to have been more than twenty thousand. In the history of the Sikhs this fateful incident is remembered as "*Ghullu Ghara*" (*Lukhthola and Lahoty*) of *Sambat* of 1802, or 1746, or an indiscriminate slaughter in an open field. Only about 4,000 Sikhs escaped out of this great and horrible carnage which took place near village Lakhthola and is generally known by that name in Sikh history. (For full description see *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh Bhangu, pp. 376-394.) "The *Dewan* fully avenged his brother's death by defeating the Sikhs with great slaughter and driving them to the north-eastern corner of the Punjab. To complete his revenge, he brought with him a thousand Sikhs in irons to Lahore, and having compelled them to ride on donkeys bare-backed, paraded

them in the bazars of Lahore. They were then taken to the *Nakhas Khana* or horse market outside the Delhi gate of the city and beheaded one after another, without mercy." (Mohammad Latif, p. 213 ; Henry Prinsep, p. 4).

About August 1746 the execution of Bhai Taru Singh with his followers took place near the Ghora Nakhas at Lahore, where a *Shahid Ganj* or martyr's tomb stands to commemorate the martyrs. Bhai Taru Singh was ordered to cut his hair and to renounce his faith, but the old companion of Guru Gobind Singh would yield neither his conscience nor the symbol of his conviction. Sardar Mehtab Singh of Miran Kot was also captured by Government officials, brought to Lahore and put to death this year.



Abdall's Invasion

On the 21st November 1746 Hyat Ullah, the second son of Zakaria Khan, who was popular as well as courageous, encamped outside the city and demanded from Yahya Khan an equal division of their father's property. Adina Beg Khan at this time was on Hyat Ullah Khan's side. For five months no settlement was arrived at. On the 17th March 1747 there was a light and indecisive skirmish between Adina Beg and Munim Khan, the Deputy of Yahya Khan. Next day Hyat Ullah made a sudden attack. Yahya's mercenary soldiers clamoured for pay. Hayat Ullah, better known as Shah Nawaz Khan, entered Lahore on 21st March 1747, seized the Government of Lahore (Mukhlis 289, 292, 304, Elliot Vol. viii) and imprisoned his brother. Shah Nawaz Khan conferred the office

of Prime Minister on his *Dewan*, Kaura Mal, whom he sent for from Multan, and put at the head of affairs (Latif, 214). With the help of his aunt and Ahmad Yar Khan, a powerful Pathan of Kasur, Yahya Khan escaped from prison and reached Delhi. He complained of the highhandedness of his younger brother to his uncle, the *Grand Wazir* Qumar-ud-Din Khan. Shah Nawaz Khan removed all the grey-haired in the service of his father and grandfather and confiscated their houses and properties. He then sent his steward to the Emperor with some presents, begging pardon for his acts and requesting that he might be appointed Deputy Governor of the Province under the *Wazir's* seal. The envoy arrived at Delhi with this strange letter on the 3rd September and opened negotiations which the Emperor's advisors considered it

politic to prolong (*Mukhlis Tazkra*, 293-295-300). Qamar-ud-Din reproved Shah Nawaz Khan for his impudence. Meantime Yahya Khan came back to the Punjab and began to collect an army to expel Shah Nawaz Khan from Lahore. Fearing the consequences, Shah Nawaz Khan opened secret negotiations with Ahmad Shah Abdali and persuaded him to invade this land of plenty.

About the middle of December 1747 Ahmad Shah Abdali moved from Peshawar and reached near Lahore on 8th January 1748. At this time he had nearly 12,000 best horsemen with him. About 6,000 Afghan adventurers and brigand chiefs joined him from the Frontier in the hope of plunder, gold and fair maidens.

The news of the invasion of Ahmad Shah reached the *Grand Wazir* Qamar-ud-Din at Delhi. When he

came to know the part his nephew had played in inviting Abdali general, he wrote a very strong letter to him and charged him with treason. Young and impetuous, Shah Nawaz realized the danger which awaited his own family and Hindusthan. He changed sides and resolved to oppose Ahmad Shah Abdali. He collected an army of about 16,000 fighting men. On the 11th January 1748 a battle was fought on the eastern side of Lahore around the Shalimar Garden, Mian Mir's tomb, and in the plain near Shah Balawal. The engagement continued for the whole day. About sunset the Afghans made a strong attack and routed the Indian army. The author of *Siyar* blames Adina Beg for this defeat on account of his inaction. Shah Nawaz Khan fled from the city under the cover of night. Finding their master flying in such a coward-

ly manner officers and soldiers also left Lahore to save their own lives. The city lay unprotected. On 12th January, Ahmad Shah Abdali entered the city as conqueror. (For a full description, *Mukhlis* 325-332, *Bayan-Waqai*, Public Library, Lahore, Manuscript 227; *Siyar*, iii, 17-18; *Tarikh Hussain Shai* 25; *History of the Punjab*, Latif, p. 217.)

Ahmad Shah Abdali started from Lahore on 19th February fully equipped with several guns and light artillery. The pleasure-loving and indolent Emperor of Delhi did not even care to think of the seriousness of the situation. The carpet-knights of the Court advised the Emperor to the effect that it was below the dignity and honour of Shahan-Shah to take the field in person against an upstart like Abdali. Though the *Wazir* was urging upon the Emperor the necessity of taking

immediate action, the Emperor did not pay any heed to his requests. Eventually, when danger threatened the Empire, the Emperor ordered a march on the 8th January. After halts and slow moves the Delhi army arrived near Sirhind on the 25th February leaving the women of the *harem*, treasure and stores in a small fort at Sirhind. The *Grand Wazir* left for the ford of Machhiwara.

On the other hand, Abdali well knew the weakness of the Indian army. On the 2nd March he seized Sirhind and got possession of all the treasure, artillery and women left there by the *Wazir* (*Mukhlis*, 332-337).

The two armies met on the plains on the 11th March. A pitched battle ensued. At the very beginning *Wazir Qamar-ud-Din Khan* was struck by a cannon-ball and was killed. The news of his death was concealed by his son Muin-ul-

Mulk, who now assumed the command of the Delhi army. Muin called his subordinates around him and appealed to them thus : " Advance with me or stand back from the battle as you like, but do not take to flight during the fighting and thereby ruin our cause. I myself shall fight on till my death." (*Bayan-i-Waqai*, p. 233). The action began at noon. The Imperial army consisted of about sixty thousand men. According to Sultan Ahmad Khan Barakzai, the author of *Tarikh-i-Sultani*, Ala Singh of Patiala, Raja Ishwari Singh of Jaipur, and many other petty chiefs had also assembled under the Imperial flag to fight against Ahmad Shah Abdali. The army of Abdali did not exceed 12,000 horsemen.

During the heat of action Raja Ishwari Singh fled from the field of battle. In haste and confusion he threw his kettledrum and light artillery into wells.

There was great panic and terror in the Indian army. Muin however did not lose courage. He made a desperate charge on the Afghan centre. Adina Beg was wounded twice. Many other nobles were slain. The Afghan soldiers began to give way before the superiority of numbers and fled in all directions. On the 18th Sirhind was recovered. The Imperial army pursued the Afghans up to the river Sutlej. According to the learned author of Jullundur District Gazetteer of 1904, page 29, 'in 1747 the Sikhs are found as allies of the Empire in resisting the Afghan invader. "

" Adina Beg and the leaders of the more important Sikh confederacies . . . were also opposed to the invader, who was finally defeated in 1748 near Sirhind, by Moyin-ul-Mulk (known also as Mir Mannu)." In Griffin's *Rajahs of the Punjab* we read

the following on p. 457 : " A little later Jassa Singh Ahluwalia joined the Bhangi, Kanhaya and Ramgharia Chiefs, and his old enemy Adina Beg in opposing the advance of Ahmad Shah Durrani, who had invaded India. The Sikhs at this time were very indifferent as regular troops and although they harassed Ahmad Shah's march as guerillas, and captured some of his baggage at the Chenab, yet the only time they tried their strength with him in a regular engagement near Sirhind they were defeated with considerable loss." On hearing of the defeat of Ahmad Shah Abdali the Emperor of Delhi appointed Muin-ul-Mulk as the *Subedar* of Lahore and Multan. On the 12th April Muin got orders to proceed towards his new *Subedari* at once and take charge of it. Muin-ul-Mulk was greatly perturbed, for he had no army except his personal contingent

to quell the disturbance and anarchy into which this province had fallen. He tried to persuade some old companions of his father to accompany him to Lahore, without any effect. With a small army of 2,000 horsemen only Mannu entered Lahore.

The Mannu Regime

Mir Mannu was a man of intelligence, courage, vigour and ability. He commenced attempts to bring order and peace out of confusion and disturbance. He conferred the office of *Dewani* on Kaura Mall. The Sikhs had also gained power and possessed some territory during this stormy period of about 16 months of civil war and invasion. Prominent leaders of the Khalsa *Dals*, *Budha* as well as *Tarna*, were Sham Singh of Naroke in Sialkot, Karora Singh Dallewalia, Charat Singh, Sukerchakia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangi ;

Dip Singh and Natha Singh Shahida, Sukha Singh of Mari Kamo, Nawab Kapur Singh of Faizullahpur, Jai Singh Kanayah, Hira Singh Nakai of village Baiharwal in Lahore District and Karam Singh *Khatri* of Amritsar (*Panth-Parkash Rattan Singh Bhangoo*, Browne, Tracts II, 16). During the period of tumult and distress which followed the Persian and first Afghan invasion, the Sikhs emerged more conspicuously from their places of concealment, and collecting numerous parties of adventurers, they soon rose into prominence. Even at the low ebb to which the Sikhs had been reduced by the destruction of their force, the death of their leader and the proscription of their sect, they had continued to resort secretly to Amritsar, and as the attention of the Emperor became at subsequent periods fixed on subjects that demanded an undivided

force, the Sikhs were not molested in visiting their favourite place of worship, which gradually rose into the capital of their narrow territory (Forster's *Travels*, 272).

A descriptive picture of a Sikh of those days is given by G. R. C. Williams in the *Calcutta Review*, No. 119 (1875) in the following words :

“ Hardy, strong-limbed, well-mounted and armed with a spear, sword and good matchlock”, the Sikh Ulhans’ endurance and rapidity of movement were quite commensurate with his rapacity, enabling him to baffle, if not defy, superior numbers. As a pitch, he could march some twenty miles or thirty a day on no better fare than a little parched gram washed down with pure cold water. A tent he despised, baggage in the ordinary sense of the word he had none. Besides his weapons, his whole

kit consisted of horse-gear, a few of the simplest cooking utensils, and two blankets, one for himself and the other for his faithful steed. Although his tactics mainly resolved themselves into a prolonged series of skirmishes conducted somewhat after the Parthian fashion, yet in the strife of men contending hand to hand, he was terrible." (Also Forster p. 290).

"The Sikhs had built a mud fort near Amritsar, which they called the name of Ram Rauni. Their leader Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, proclaimed the birth of a new power in the state—the *Dal* of the Khalsa or army of the theocracy of the Singhs. The Khalsa *Dals* roamed throughout the Punjab in bands of 200 or 300 each. And at the time of *Dewali* and *Baisakhi* they assembled for worship, to pass *Gurmata* and think out new schemes of communal

welfare. In the year 1747, Jassa Singh with other Sikh *Jathedars* (leaders) made a surprise attack on Kasur, but it was strongly fortified and the effort proved abortive."

After the departure of Ahmad Shah the Sikhs attacked Raja Gurditta Mal, the *Nazim* of Hoshiarpur and Sialkot, in the Punjab Province. In the same year Jassa Singh attacked Adina Beg Khan, the *Nazim* of the Jullundur Doab near Hoshiarpur. Then they turned upon Salabat Khan, the Governor of Amritsar, killed him and took possession of a large part of the district. (P. R. 457.) Mannu wanted to bring order out of chaos. After he was firmly established, "his first act was to storm the fort of Ram Rauni, which he captured and reduced. He then stationed detachments of troops in all parts infested by the Sikhs, with stringent orders to

shave their heads and beards, wherever they might be found. These measures being rigorously enforced, inspired public confidence, checked the progress of Sikh proselytism and compelled the votaries of the *Guru* to conceal themselves in the mountains or jungles. Mir Mannu issued strict orders to the hill Rajas to seize the Sikhs and send them in irons to Lahore. These orders were obeyed and hundreds of Sikhs were daily brought and butchered at the *Nakhas* or *Shahid Ganj*, outside the Delhi Gate (in Landa Bazar), before multitudes of spectators. The young Mannu became an irreconcilable foe of the Sikhs and was determined to extirpate the nation." (Latif p. 221.) They (Sikhs) died heroically. In those days they used to sing the following song which narrates the atrocities of Mannu, the heroism of the Sikhs and the increase in their number in a fine

simile :—

*Mannu sadi datri—asin Mannu de
soe. Jion jion Mannu sanoo katte
asin dune chuone hoe.*

“Mannu is our sickle and we are his rice-blades. As he cuts, we grow four-fold in number.”

The Sikhs were not at all discouraged to face these atrocities. They were a spirited people. The birth of the “Khalsa” had occurred under the sword of Guru Gobind Singh. The *Amrit* made them immortals. As soon as an agriculturist, a carpenter or a grain-seller let his hair grow and took *Amrit*, he was one of the Khalsa or the Sikh congregation. He was a brother of the tress-knot, with perfect sentiments of brotherhood towards all his co-religionists. This spirit of fraternity and the love of arms attracted many youths to become Sikhs and join in drinking from the

tasteful cup of martyrdom bestowed on them by Guru Gobind Singh.

Mannu could not suppress the Khalsa for "the spark, that had laid concealed amongst the ruins of the fabric of Nanak, burst forth and produced a flame which hath never been extinguished" (Forster p. 272). The same author says: "Mir Mannu, the Governor of Lahore in the reign of Ahmad Shah, alarmed at an increase of the Sikh power, the evils of which had been already manifested by the devastations of the Sikhs in his own country, made a vigorous attack on them, and it is supposed that their force would have been annihilated, had not this people found a strenuous advocate in his Minister, Kaura Mal, who was himself of the *Khulasah* sect and diverted Mir Mannu from reaping the full fruits of the superiority he had gained" (Forster p. 273). "The

preservation of the Sikhs from the effects of Mir Mannu's success appears to have been largely promoted by the interference of his Minister, Kaura Mal, who being himself a Sikh naturally became a trusted advocate of the sect and who it is said completed his ascendancy over the Mohammadan by a considerable donation" (Forster 225 ; Browne, *Tracts* ii, 16). "Both Kaura Mal and Adina Beg, but especially the former, the one from predilection, and the other from policy, are understood to have dissuaded Mir Mannu from proceeding to extremities against the Sikhs. Mannu had objects in view of greater moment to himself than the suppression of an infant sect" (Cunningham, annotated by H. L. O. Garrett, M.A., p. 95).

On the same point Latif says, "Kaura Mal, who was himself a Sikh

of the *Khulasah* sect withheld Mir Mannu from carrying out his resolution against the Sikhs. His plans were also secretly thwarted by Adina Beg Khan, the artful Governor of the Jullundur Doab, who saw in the turbulent tribe a means of advancing his own interests and took care not to reduce them altogether, but to confine their excursions within such bounds as to give them internal security, without affording them an opportunity of ostensibly coming into contact with the ruling authority" (p. 221 ; Malcolm, p. 91).

How far the above statements about *Dewan Kaura Mal* are true and tenable I am not here disposed to discuss. However, gratitude towards Raja Kaura Mal is still to be read in the eyes of the children of this grateful nation. Whenever in a Sikh assembly his name is uttered they always add the

word *Mittha* or sweet, as an epithet before his name, for the word *Kaura* in Punjabi language means bitter. He is idolized as a sympathiser and a helper. In fact, he was a Sikh, great of this great people.

The power and number of the Khalsa *Dals* had been greatly increased by this time. They could collect more than 20,000 fighting men at the time of any emergency. They had become a formidable political body and openly declared "*Imperium in Imperio*". Now among their ranks had arisen leaders, who nourished ideas of territorial acquisition. They were men of the world, trained in the use of the sword to save their faith from aggressors ; bred and brought up and accustomed to rush to the executioner's dagger with zeal and conviction. The position of Mir Mannu at this time was weak and

insecure. He had influential enemies at the Imperial Court, like *Wazir Safdar Jang* and other Persian nobles. Shah Nawaz Khan was also trying his best at Delhi to oust Mir Mannu from the Punjab and get the hereditary *Subedari* for himself. The threatening danger of Ahmad Shah was on his head like a Damocles' sword. Under these circumstances Mir Mannu could not have carried out the work of persecution so actively and with effective results against a people, whose fathers and grandfathers were either publicly executed at *Ghora Nakhas* or died boldly in the *Ghallu Gharas* at *Kahnuana* and *Lakthoocha* or had been hotly chased, pursued and slain by the Imperial army in their "happy homes on the saddles".

Adina Beg Khan, an officer in the service of Mir Mannu, had been sent with an army into the centre of the

Sikh district which he overran, and encountering their army some time in the year 1749, had defeated it with great slaughter (Forster's *Travels* p. 273).

At the end of *Sambat* 1805 or in the beginning of 1749 the Khalsa assembled at Amritsar to perform half-yearly worship and pass *Gurmata*. They also repaired their old fort Ram Rauni, at Amritsar.

When the news reached Mir Mannu he sent Adina Beg to make a surprise attack. *Dewan* Kaura Mal and Sadika or Sadika Khan joined him. Aziz Khan *Subedar* and many hill Rajas also came to help and brought many cannon with them. The Sikhs were forced to seek shelter in their fortress. Then the Khalsa passed a *Gurmata* and said, "The Mohammadans are inflicting heavy losses upon us. Let us win martyrdom and kill the Moham-

madans, let the world hear tales of this battle of ours also. This is a religious battle and whosoever is (touched) or killed by arms in it, will become purified. Then the Sikhs came out, fought bravely ; some of them died, others returned to the fort. The Sikhs fell upon their enemies like lions. They looked like a flash of lightning in the clouds. They killed one man here and struck the other there. They moved on foot with the same rapidity as horsemen. In the darkness of night the Sikhs fell upon their enemies. The Mohammadans in the confusion fought and killed each other. One Sikh proved himself equal to one hundred enemies. In this way a small band fought superior numbers. The Sikhs who were concealing themselves in forests and caves, came out to seek martyrdom by fighting against their enemies.

Then the Mohammadans commenced digging mines under the walls of the Sikh fortress. The Sikhs deepened their *khari* or moat. Many Sikhs protected the fortress and stationed themselves in the middle of the moat and the Mohammadans could not proceed further in their operations. The Sikhs did not fear to fight and die, but unfortunately stores of food were exhausted. The numbers of the Mohammadan army increased and death threatened the Sikhs in the face."

Then the Khalsa held a *Gurmata*. "If we leave the field to-day we shall prove ourselves black spots in the history of our glorious forefathers. So to fight and die is the best way and let us become makers of a remarkable incident in the world's history. Let us make a united dash and cut off the heads of our enemies from their bodies. Let everyone of us kill four

or five of our enemies. Fight with the Mohammadans with courage and mettle." Then the Sikhs made a death-defying attack on the army of Adina Beg, repulsed him and took possession of his trenches. Then they attacked on Sadika Beg's side and he was forced to leave his position. The Sikhs were great warriors, for they had taken *Amrit* or *Pahul* of the double-edged sword or *Khanda*. In that way the Sikhs fought their enemies for days together. The Mohammadans could not exterminate them, for if one Sikh died, two others came and joined the garrison. Though many were killed, the numbers of the Sikhs increased like the waters of a stream flowing from a fountain. All those who were concealing themselves in jungles and hills had flocked to the place on hearing the news and entered the fortress by some device. When

the Sikhs heard the news of the death of the Sikhs at Ram Rauni, numbers came and joined their brotherhood. If some Sikhs were interrupted on their way, the others inside the fortress helped them. They said, "We must die with our brethren. Otherwise with what faces shall we present ourselves before our Lord and Guru?"

The Mohammadans saw that if one died two others joined him. So they raised a mound, dug up a *khai* and stopped all the byways leading to the fortress, for these Sikhs who came from outside brought food, ammunition and resources with them. When the enemies blockaded all the ways, the Sikhs thought, "Our death is fast approaching. Let us kill everyone who approaches near our fort and this *Gurmata* was passed 'Let us die and win martyrdom, let us find out Adina Beg and kill him.'" The Khalsa

resolved to carry out the above determination (*Panth Prakash Sardar Rattan Singh Bhangoo*, pages 398-404).

At this time the news reached Mir Mannu that Shah Nawaz Khan had occupied Multan and expelled the officials of the Governor from that place. *Wazir* Sardar Jang was afraid of the influence and popularity of the winner of Manupur, for he was the probable rival to the *Wazirat* of Hindusthan. *Nawab* Safdar Jang was the leader of the Persian nobles. He was thinking of mischievous schemes to ruin Mir Mannu and his Turki party.

"The first instrument of this malicious design was Nasir Khan, ex-Governor of Kabul, who was recently living in Delhi in unemployment and official neglect. On removing to Lahore in search of bread, he was received very kindly by Muin, who appointed him *Faujdar* of the famous

'four *Mahals*' and promised to support him in an attempt to recover Kabul from Abdali after Nasir had established his power and prestige in his new charge. The ungrateful wretch, after about a year of service, felt himself grown strong enough to turn against his benefactor. He listened to Safdar Jang's seductive message urging him to increase his army, fight Muin and wrest from him the *Subedari* of Lahore, which would then be formally conferred upon him by a letter from the Court through the *Wazir's* influence. Nasir by offers of higher pay seduced a thousand Uzbek horsemen of Muin to desert to his side. The plot now leaked out. Muin, with great promptitude equipped a force, marched to Sialkot, and after a few hours' battle drove Nasir Khan in utter rout to Delhi, covered with public disgrace, in July 1749."

(Sir J. N. Sarkar, F. M. E. p. 415-416 ; *Miskin* 5.6 ; *Muze* 9, 26. Tah. 24 b.)

At the same time Safdar Jang had planted another thorn in the side of Muin. He had found a useful tool for this purpose in Shah Nawaz Khan (Hizbar Jang, the second son of Zakaria Khan) who, though a Turk by birth, had become a *Shia* like Safdar Jang and sought his patronage. The *Wazir* told him, "the *Subedari* of Lahore is your rightful heritage. Prepare yourself to win it by all means. Go to Multan, there increase your army, and expel Muin from Lahore by force." The *Wazir* sent Shah Nawaz to Multan (May 1749), with an Imperial letter of appointment as *Subedar* of that province and some money and equipment of his own. This noble, on arriving at Multan, began to increase his army by seducing Muin's soldiers with offers

on higher pay and in this way gathered 15,000 men, horse and foot, round his banner, with some pieces of artillery. Then he wrote to Muin for a passport to visit his father's tomb at Lahore. The trick was too transparent. (Sir J. N. Sarkar p. 416-417, *Miskin* 7-8, *Muze* 26, Tah. 25 a.)

When the news of the preparations of Shah Nawaz Khan reached Mir Mannu, he at once recalled his army from Ram-Rauni or Amritsar. Then *Dewan Kaura Mal* advised Mir Mannu to conciliate the Sikhs and get their help against Shah Nawaz Khan. Adina Beg also acquiesced in the matter. *Dewan Kaura Mal* and *Bakhshi Ismat Khan* were ordered to proceed against Shah Nawaz Khan. Mir Mannu out of necessity and policy extended a cordial hand towards the Sikhs (*Panth Parkash*, page 404). A permanent accommodation was ulti-

mately effected through the mediation of Kaura Mal, between the Sikhs and the Governor of Lahore (Forster's *Travels*, p. 273), and the terms of peace were settled.

" Many Sikhs joined *Dewan* Kaura Mal on this expedition. He marched against Shah Nawaz, putting his faith in the Sikhs. At the place where the Sikhs held their daily prayers, Kaura Mal came and attended the meeting and said to the Sikhs, ' By the grace of the Guru, I will capture Shah Nawaz alive.' But the Khalsa retorted in reply, ' We want to kill him altogether, for many Sikhs were executed and slain by his orders, and can we allow him to live, if we only see him'"

The battle ensued. Shah Nawaz came out to fight a single combat with Kaura Mal. The Sikhs were fighting under their leaders. Kaura Mal

appealed to the honour of the Khalsa. The Sikhs told him not to fear and said. " We shall teach him a lesson when he comes near, we all are well prepared to receive him. We will put him to death instantly"

. " The Sikhs then fired a volley. Shah Nawaz was struck in the heart. He fell down on the earth from his horse. He could not stand up again. Then a Sikh came down from his horse and cut off the head of Shah Nawaz and handed it over to Kaura Mal. The head was sent to Lahore to be presented before Mir Mannu. On seeing his enemy's head Mannu was greatly pleased. He then took paper and pen in hand and conferred the title of *Maharaja Bahadur* on Kaura Mal." (*Panth Parkash Rattan Singh Bhangoo*, pages 405, 406).

" Several skirmishes took place with varied success and for about six

months the Governor of Multan maintained his ground. But at the end of that period a decisive battle was fought which determined his fate and he was himself slain and his whole army dispersed. Elated with the success which had attended his followers' arms, the Viceroy of Lahore conferred on Kaura Mal the title of Raja, or according to Cunningham, Maharaja, and created him the *Subedar* of the Province of Multan in September or October 1749 " (Latif, page 222 ; *Amdat-ul-twarikh*, page 131 ; Cunningham, page 95 ; Prinsep, page 10). " In this expedition Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and other Sikhs assisted *Dewan* Kaura Mal. They rendered valuable service and also received a share of the booty and the stipulated sum " (Latif, page 315; *Rajas of the Punjab*, page 457).

From May 1749 to 5th March 1752, the day of the death of Raja Kaura

Mal, the Sikhs remained at peace with Mir Mannu and helped him in his expeditions. In these three years they recouped their strength, built new *Gurdwaras* (temples of worship) and the number of Khalsa *Dal* was greatly increased. "The Sikhs were known to hold it a religious duty to help one another of the faith to the utmost. So whenever the villagers underwent oppression, they let their hair and beard grow, cried out 'Akal ! Akal ! ' and embraced the religion of Guru Gobind Singh. The other Sikhs came to their help, and thus their religion spread rapidly in the Punjab. As the peasantry were more and more ruined by their rulers, the number of the Sikhs multiplied in proportion " (F. M. 1,425 Sujar, iii 51).

Soon after the conquest of Multan when Mir Mannu had not yet fully enjoyed his recent success, Abdali

appeared for the second time, in the autumn of 1749. Mannu collected his forces and encamped near Shahdara. For months the two armies lay in their respective trenches. Small skirmishes were fought. This state of desultory warfare weakened Mannu's position. Peace was concluded through the mediation of a holy man, *Maulvi* Abdullah (February 1750). Muin promised to send Rs. 17 lacs to Abdali as the annual surplus revenue of four *Mahals*, Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujrat and Aurangabad (*Siyyar-ul-Mutakhrin* iii 30 ; *Bayan-i-Waqai* 248-49.)

In December 1751 Ahmad Shah Abdali made his third invasion of India. He had not received from Mir Mannu the sum of tribute promised according to the treaty of 1750. Abdali wrote a letter to Mannu saying, "Send me 24 lacs of rupees for the three years past and then I shall go

away". Mannu put up some excuses, but Abdali wanted hard cash and gold — not words. With a large army he started for India. On his way near Attock he received a sum of Rs. 9 lacs from the officials of Mannu. Abdali took the money but continued his onward march.

Mir Mannu was not also unmindful. He gathered together a large army, with numerous artillery and encamped at a place 22 miles northward of Lahore. The Sikhs " had also accompanied him to check the advance of the Afghan invader. The Afghan leader, Jahan Khan, reached Lahore by a secret route and encamped near the tomb of Shah Balawal. Muin now hastened to Lahore and lodged his army in the trenches outside the city. A desultory battle continued. The ravage and devastation of the Afghan soldiers were so formidable that for forty miles on

each side no lamp was lighted in any house and grain became exceedingly dear" (Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar, F.M.E., page 429). The famous Sikh historian Rattan Singh Bhangoo, writing in 1893 A.D., gives the following description of the part played by the Sikhs in this battle (*Panth Parkash* pp. 408-411). "Then Raja Kaura Mal wrote a letter to the Khalsa on behalf of Mannu to the following effect, 'Come and help us in repulsing the *Ghilzaies* and Ahmad Shah Abdali. We will supply you with ammunition and fighting weapons. We shall pay you money also. When this enemy is defeated and pushed, we will hold a conference and promise you that you will be allowed to conquer and possess for yourselves the rebellious people of the Lahore province. Long since Baba Banda occupied the hilly tract, not a single penny has been remitted to the

Lahore Treasury. They had also disgraced the Sikhs when the Sikhs sought refuge in their country. The Khalsa shall be allowed to conquer and possess this tract independently. Attack the masters of Lakthouha and Basohli and moreover conquer Dun also. The revenue of the hilly tract is equal to the revenue of the Punjab'.

"Then the Sikhs assembled and came to Kaura Mal at Lahore. But soon they quarrelled among themselves, for every one of them wanted to assert his own personality. Hari Singh Bhangi killed Khushai Singh Ramgarhia by treachery. All the Sikhs resented this action. They proposed to destroy and sack the army of the Bhangi Sardars. When the Bhangis came to know of it, they left Lahore. The followers of the Bhangis numbered about 10,000 and the number of the other *Dals* was about

20,000 strong. The Bhangis and many others left in disgust. Then they encamped at Lahore near the Shalamar Gardens. Some of the Sikhs came to Lahore. They saw some butchers with a cow. They killed them but the populace attacked them and they were covered with disgrace.

"In the afternoon Sukha Singh, an adopted son of Shiam Singh of Mari-Kamboh, rode his horse after drinking *bhang*. Without any orders and consulting anyone he crossed the ford of Ravi. After him crossed many *Nihangs*, no one counted their number. They went near the camps of Abdali.....
 ———The *Ghilzaies* thought that the *Dal* was coming. They became alarmed. Ahmad Shah came to know.....
 ——— He mounted his horse and ordered four companies of soldiers to start with him, and said, 'The Indian army has come and now we cannot

save our lives by running back to Kabul'. The *Ghilzais* armed themselves with swords and issued out to fight with the Sikhs. Sukha Singh saw that a large number was about to attack him and his comrades. As the number of his followers was small, he found himself in a fix. He thought, 'If we put up a fight with them, they will certainly defeat us, because they are superior in number. If we run away, the other Sikhs will tease us by their taunts'. He decided between the two alternatives and preferred to die than to leave the field.——Then he said to his followers thus : 'I do not take a pace backward. We will die here as martyrs in the name of religion. Those who love their bodies should cross the river'. The Sikhs replied 'How we can desert you. We have been interdining together, so now also we shall drink the cup of martyr-

dom together'. Then the fight began. Sukha Singh was killed in the action. When the Sikhs returned, the army of Lahore fired a volley upon them from the fort. From this attitude of the Lahore army the Sikhs were disgusted and left Lahore."

The army of Lahore fought valiantly, but no help came from Delhi for four months. It was expected in vain. Moreover, Adina Beg hated Raja Kaura Mal from the core of his heart. He was a man who could sacrifice anything for his self-interest. "The *Durannies* subjected the intrenched forts of Mannu to a strict blockade, cutting off all communication from without. Famine now prevailed in the Lahore camp to such an extent that the only fodder for horses and cattle consisted of chopped straw from the roofs of the thatched houses, while the pro-

visions for the men were completely exhausted. A council of war was now called consisting of Raja Kaura Mal, Adina Beg and other commanders. Adina Beg gave it as his opinion that as no succour or reinforcement could be expected from Delhi, an action ought to be risked ——— Raja Kaura Mal was opposed to his advice. He observed that the Viceroy's troops were mostly raw levies, who were no match in the field for the hardy veterans of the Shah; that the country for a wide space round had been foraged and wasted, and the distress for provisions was not less in the Durani camp than in their own, that in twenty days more the hot weather would set in, when the northern troops of the Shah would find the sun and wind intolerable in the plains and hence would be compelled to retreat or attack them in their lines,

to disadvantage. There can be no doubt that the advice of the Hindu was the preferable and more prudent course but the Viceroy was young, and not free from the impatience and impetuosity of youth and the opinion of Adina Beg fell more in accordance with his own disposition " (Latif, p. 222 ; Prinsep, p. 12).

The war dragged on ; then came a catastrophe. The Lahore army's long confinement within its trenches made the place foul and unhealthy, denuded the neighbourhood of grass and trees and exhausted the wells. At last it was decided to shift the camp some ten miles to a better position with a plentiful supply of good water, grass and fuel. Next morning (5th March 1752) the march began at dawn. Adina Beg led the van, *Diwan* Kaura Mal the rear, and Muin himself the centre, where all the luggage was

placed on loaded carts and transport beasts.

The Afghans attacked vigorously the front and rear and threatened on both flanks. Muin sent 300 of his *Mughal jizail* men to support Adina Beg and the same number to Kaura Mal. Adina Beg is accused by some contemporary writers of having treacherously neglected to support Kaura Mal so that the cohesion among the three divisions of Muin's army was lost. When Kaura Mal was hastening to his master's defence a cannon ball wounded his elephant. As he was changing for another he was shot down by a bullet, and his troops dispersed in panic. The author of *Farhat-un-Nazirin* (in Elliot viii 168) charges Adina Beg with having shot Kaura Mal from behind. The last battle took place near the village of Mohammad Buti. (Sir Jadu

Nath Sarkar p. 330 ; Lahore Gazetteer, 1883. 27, and *Amdat-ul-Tawarikh*, p. 130, Latif 223 ; Prinsep, 21; *Siyar*, 43-44 ; Hussain, 31-34.)

After the death of gallant Maharaja Kaura Mal, Mannu saw that a prolonged contest would be ruinous and he prudently retired to the citadel and gave his adhesion to the conqueror. The Shah was satisfied with the surrender of considerable treasure and with the annexation of Lahore and Multan to his dominions. He expressed his admiration of Mannu's spirit as a leader, efficiency as a manager, and continued him as his own delegate in the new acquisition (Cunningham, p 96).

After the death of Raja Kaura Mal and the return of Abdali from the Punjab, the old orders against the Sikhs were again revised. Muin very thoughtfully had 990 *jizails* made

and employed against the Sikhs. " His detachments ran after them up to 28 kos and slew them wherever they stood up to a fight. Whosoever brought a Sikh's head to Muin received a reward of Rs. 10 for each man slain. Any soldier who captured a Sikh's horse could keep it as his own. If his own horse perished in the campaign, another was given to him from the government stable. " (*Miskin* 12, Sarkar, F.M.E., p. 426.)

One expedition led against the Sikhs by Muin himself towards the close of 1752 is thus described by his page. " When the *Nawab Sahib*, i. e., Muin-ul-Mulk, was out on an administrative tour in the Batala District he heard that a large body of Sikhs were causing disturbances in that neighbourhood, stopping the road and ruining the cultivators. He sent Sayyad Jamal-ud-Din Khan with his

Bakhshi, Ghazi Beg Khan, to punish them. These officers marched to the spot, fought the Sikhs and put them to flight. Nine hundred of the Sikh infantry threw themselves into the small fort Ram Rauni close to Chak Guru Har Gobind, which Jamal-ud-Din immediately invested. After a few days the garrison rushed out, sword in hand, and fell upon the besiegers. " (*Miskin* 17 ; Sir J. N. Sarkar, F.M.E. p. 42.)

" Wherever he heard of Sikh risings he sent Khwaja Mirza with troops to suppress them ; the Sikhs who were captured alive were sent to hell by being beaten with wooden mallets At times Adina Beg sent 40 or 50 Sikh captives from the Doaba, Jullundur district. They were killed with wooden hammers " (*Miskin* 19 ; J. N. Sarkar, 427 F.M.E.). But this altogether had no more effect than

stamping upon a few hundred white ants. Such conflicts with Sikh bands till the very day of Muin's death (3rd November 1753) continued and grew more numerous after him (Sir J. N. Sarkar, F. M. E., pages 426-427).

Out of this active persecution extending over a period of 40 years the Khalsa came triumphant. There is no power on earth which can stop on their forward path a people rich in moral idealism and strong in power of suffering. Guru Gobind Singh gave the Khalsa two gifts : *Amrit* and *Bani*, or the sacred word and teachings of the holy book. A common man in the street, when he takes *Pahul* or *Amrit*, and wears the *kakars* of the Guru on his body, becomes a spirit born person. He is transformed and is ever ready to fight battles in the cause of righteousness. By the re-

citation and realization of *Bani*, or the contents of the sacred Scripture, he becomes a superman and conquers the fear of death.

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